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PHOTO RELEASE: AARP Members Endorse Governor Baker's Housing Choice Legislation



AARP leaders join members of the Administration to support the Baker-Polito Administration's legislation, An Act to Promote Housing Choices

BOSTON – Today, Governor Charlie Baker, Secretary of Elder Affairs Alice Bonner, Department of Housing and Community Development Undersecretary Janelle Chan, MassHousing Executive Director Chrystal Kornegay and members of the Administration met with several members of the Massachusetts Chapter of the AARP to discuss the administration's efforts in providing Massachusetts' aging population with diverse housing options. Leaders from AARP also expressed their support of the Baker-Polito Administration's comprehensive housing legislation, *An Act to Promote Housing Choices*, which will drive housing production and affordability across the Commonwealth.

"Our administration is committed to providing more affordable and diverse housing options for Massachusetts' aging population appreciates AARP's support for our bill," **said Governor Charlie Baker**. "We look forward to working with our colleagues in the Legislature to pass this legislation."

"The older population in the Commonwealth has strengthened our workforce and helped to build stronger communities," **said Lt. Governor Karyn Polito**. "With the support of AARP and others, we are committed to building more sustainable housing options for older adults here in Massachusetts."

In Massachusetts, there are more people over the age of 60 than under the age of 20 and older adults will make up 23% of the Commonwealth's population by 2035. To meet the impending needs of this fast-growing demographic, Governor Baker established the Governor's Council to Address Aging in Massachusetts, which has [provided recommendations to promote healthy aging and other age-friendly initiatives across the state](#). In January of 2018, Massachusetts became the second state in the nation to join AARP's Network of Age-Friendly Communities, representing a major milestone in Massachusetts' goal to become the most age-friendly state in the nation.

"The vast majority of people age 50 and older want to stay in their homes and communities for as long as possible. Governor Baker's Housing Choice bill addresses the availability, affordability, and variety of housing options, which are very important to AARP and are woven into our Age Friendly Community and State principles," **said Mike Festa, AARP Massachusetts State Director**.

The Baker-Polito Administration's Housing Choice Initiative will create a new system of incentives and rewards for municipalities that deliver sustainable housing growth; create a new technical assistance toolbox, empower cities and towns to plan for new housing production; and deliver smart, effective zoning at the local level through proposed legislative reforms. The ability to rezone more easily will increase multi-family housing production near town centers or transit access, facilitating community involvement and travel by older adults.

"Housing is a critical component of livable communities and supports healthy aging," **said Secretary of Elder Affairs Alice Bonner**. "The Administration's Housing Choice legislation will add to the options that older people have told us that they want and need, so that they can continue to live and thrive in the communities they call home. This legislation represents an approach to 'aging in all policies' that is already moving us towards our goal of becoming the most age-friendly state in the nation."

"We are pleased to receive the Massachusetts AARP's endorsement for our Housing Choice Legislation, which we believe is crucial to the future of our Commonwealth," **said Housing and Community Development Undersecretary Janelle Chan**. "Massachusetts needs a balanced housing market that meets the demands of our diverse residents, and our current market is not doing that. From older adults looking to downsize and younger families hoping to put down roots, many of our residents are struggling to find affordable, appropriate housing. Our Housing Choice Initiative and Legislation provides powerful tools for cities and towns to tackle this vital challenge."

The Housing Choice Initiative will deliver more than \$10 million in incentives, grant funding and technical assistance per year, and enable Massachusetts to realize a new goal of creating 135,000 housing units over the next 7 years.

In response to the Commonwealth's need for increased, affordable housing, last month, [Governor Baker signed a \\$1.8 Billion Housing Bond Bill](#), *An Act Financing the Production and Preservation of Housing for Low and Moderate Income Residents (H.4536)*. The administration has also [designated 67 cities and towns as Housing Choice Communities](#), which incentivizes municipalities to build new and affordable units and adopt best practices that promote sustainable housing development.

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